

5. Needs of Adults And Families—The following table shows the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) listing of priority problems for Adults, Families and Children from the 1999-2000 Human Services Plan.



MAG PRIORITY PROBLEMS OF FAMILIES & CHILDREN – 1999/2000
#1 Unable to meet basic needs – food, shelter, clothing, medical care, dental care employment
#2 Abuse and physical neglect
#3 Lack of affordable housing
#4 Support for employment and job training
#5 Adequate supervision, education and protection for infants and children
#6 Lack of opportunities and conditions that support positive development (e.g., no friends or family in area)
#7 Support for families with infants & children - stability, nurturing , security & protection
#8 Behavioral health related problems (alcohol, drug abuse, mental health, teen suicide)
#9 Teen pregnancies
#10 Positive socialization opportunities
#11 Minority youth over-represented in criminal justice system, under-represented elsewhere
#12 Service delivery system fragmented & lacks coordinated approach for families and children

Item 1, above, regarding meeting basic needs, strongly relates to the issue of *Welfare Reform*. In 2000, two years after the Welfare Reform program was initiated, there was a large reduction in welfare recipients. In Tempe, the percentage of reduction was **36%**. Nationally, the decrease has been **44%**, from over 14 million in 1993 to under 8 million at the end of 1998. In Arizona, the numbers decreased from over 63,000 in December 1995 to around 36,000 in September 1998, a decrease of some 27,000 or **43%**.

A recent Urban Institute study ("Why Are Welfare Caseloads Falling?", by Stephen H. Bell), summarizes nine other studies that attempt to explain the drop (*italics added*).

- "Authors for all nine of the studies examined agree that the *strong economy* played a role in the caseload decline of the 1990s, reducing the number of AFDC and TANF recipients roughly 5 percent for every 1 percentage-point reduction in the nation's unemployment rate.... There is less agreement on the influence of changes in welfare policy.... Most analyses show policy making a difference, albeit a smaller one than economic change....

- However, three of the nine studies conclude that the association between policy reform and caseload change in the 1990s is misleading. They attribute caseload decline to two nonpolicy factors: *lagged responses to economic growth* and generally *sluggish adjustment of welfare rolls* to any change in external circumstances....
- The remaining studies—six of the nine reviewed—conclude *that welfare reform did have an important downward influence on caseloads* during the mid-1990s, effects that grew following the federal reforms of 1996....explain 15 to 35 percent of the drop in welfare dependence in recent years, with the economic expansion accounting for another 25 to 50 percent. (Twenty-five to 60 percent remains unexplained or relates to shifts in other factors such as demographics.)
- The analysts who do not see policy playing a part in falling rolls attribute an even larger share of the decline to the economy, up to 80 percent.
- None of these analysts has been able, in convincing fashion, to tie caseload declines to individual welfare reform components such as benefit time limits or increased work sanctions...."

Other factors related to welfare reform include the following:

Many former recipients have left welfare rolls involuntarily - Some 10,000 Arizona households have lost welfare assistance due to reaching time limits (two years at any one time, five years lifetime) and 6,500 households were "sanctioned" off welfare in FY 1999, i.e., benefits were eliminated because of rules violations (per Vic Hudenko, AZ Homeless Coordinator). The fate of many who have left the welfare rolls, either voluntarily or involuntarily is unknown. According to an Arizona Republic article of 11/30/98, "the state doesn't know what happened to half the families who left the welfare rolls during the past three years or why they left."

There has been a related drop in participation in related programs such as food stamps and health care. Many families are still eligible for Food Stamps and Medicaid health care programs even if no longer eligible for welfare assistance.

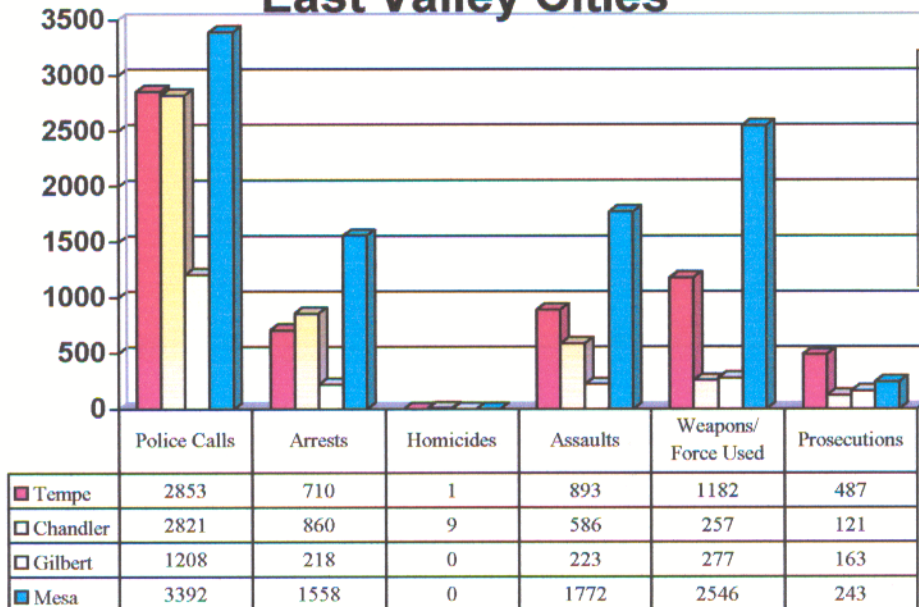
Many of those leaving welfare have become "working poor" - A study from Columbia University shows the national poverty rate declining within the strong national economy. However, more of the nation's poor children *have at least one parent working but are still unable to get out of poverty*. A study by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities showed that, "Welfare reform has depressed the income of some of the nation's poorest families in recent years despite a robust economy" (Arizona Republic, 8/12/99).

Items two and three on the above MAG list, *Domestic Violence* and *Affordable Housing*, are worthy of more detailed review in relation to needs of adults and families, as follows.

Domestic Violence - The Tempe Police reported 2,853 *calls* for help related to domestic violence encountered in Tempe during 2000. The chart below shows Tempe compared to some other East Valley cities.



2000 Domestic Violence Crime East Valley Cities

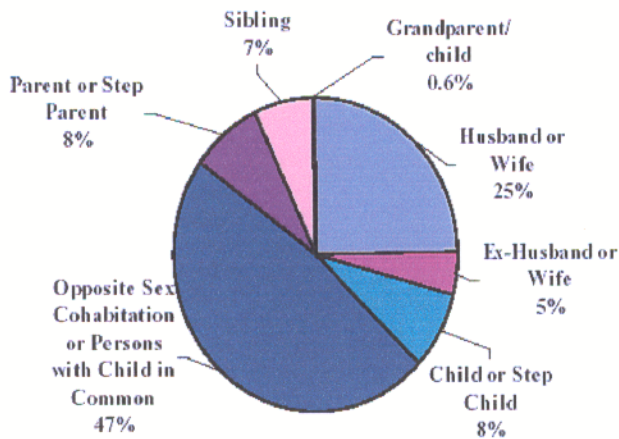


Source: AZ
Republic
10/25/01 -
Governor's Div.
Prevention of
Domestic
Violence

For Tempe, the 710 arrests represented 25% of the total calls. The 487 prosecutions represented 17% of the total calls.

The following charts show from the Tempe Police Department further detail on domestic violence crimes. The chart on the left shows who was the victim and the chart on the right shows the nature of the crime. (source, City of Tempe website).

2000 Domestic Violence Crimes in which Victim Was...



2000 Domestic Violence Crimes

